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**Course Title**: Legal Method

**Course Code**: LAW 102

**Assignment Title**: Sources of Law

Question: Discuss Secondary sources of Law in Nigeria

**What are sources of law in Nigeria?**

In order to know what comprises the law, we need to know that it is derived from various places. So basically the places from which laws are derived from are considered as the sources of law. Source of law can be defined as the places to which a legal practitioner or a judge turns to in order to answer a legal problem. Therefore these sources of laws are regarded as springboards from which law emanates; they are various vehicles through which the law is carried.

Majorly in Nigeria, there are five sources of Laws which includes;

1. Customary and Islamic law
2. Received English laws
3. Nigerian Local Legislation (Delegated Legislation)
4. Judicial Precedents
5. Law reports and Textbooks

These sources of law are further classified into Primary and Secondary sources of law. Laws made by the Nigerian Legislature form Primary sources.

**What are Secondary sources of law in Nigeria?**

Therefore, a Secondary source of law is a background resource. It is not the law but it is a commentary on the law. Therefore, Secondary sources of Law can be defined as the places to which a legal practitioner or a judge turns to in order to answer a legal problem. A Secondary source of law is used to explain, interpret, summarize, analyze and process primary sources of law. Secondary sources are mainly created by someone who did not experience the first-hand or participate in events or conditions you are researching. Basically, Secondary sources are generally one or more steps removed from the events or time period and are written or produced after the fact with the benefit of highlight. Therefore, Secondary sources of law often lack the freshness and immediacy of the original material. Lastly, Secondary sources occasionally; collect, organize, and repackage Primary sources information to increase usability and speed of delivery, such as an online encyclopedia.

The distinction between primary and secondary sources of law is very useful in determining authorities to follow in the law courts. For instance, if a case is brought before a court and one party uses a primary source of law as his authority while the other makes use of secondary sources, the scale of justice would tilt in favour of the person who presents primary sources of law. Secondary sources of law are only made use of whenever there are no primary sources of law to fall back on.

**Note**: Like Primary sources, Secondary sources materials can be written or non-written (sound, pictures, movies).

**What is the use of a Secondary source of Law?**

A Secondary source of Law can be used for three different purposes;

1. It educate you about the Law
2. It directs you to the Primary Law
3. It might serve as a persuasive authority

**Examples of Secondary sources of Law used in Nigeria are;**

1. **Law Report:** Law reports or reporters are series of books that contain judicial opinions from a selection of case law decide by courts. When a particular judicial opinion is referenced, the law report series in which the opinion is printed will determined the case citation format.
2. **Text Books:** Law textbooks are written books by scholars on laws to explain, summarize, interpret and analyze sources of laws.
3. **Treatises:** A treatise is a systematic exposition or argument in writing including a methodical discussion of the facts and principles involved and conclusions reached
4. **Legal Digests:** A digest is an index of legal positions showing which cases support each proposition. It can also be a collection of summaries of reported cases, arranged by subject and subdivided by jurisdiction and court. The main purpose of a digest is to make contents of reports available and to separate, from the great mass of case laws, those cases bearing on some specific point.
5. **Casebooks:** A casebook is a compilation of primary and secondary documents relating to a central topic together with scholarly comment, exercises, and study aids that is designed to serve as a sourcebook for short paper (as in a writing course) or as appoint of departure for a research paper.
6. **Legal Dictionaries:** A legal dictionary (also known as law dictionary) is a dictionary that is designed and complied to give information about terms used in the field of law.
7. **Newspapers:** A newspaper is a paper that is printed and distributed usually daily or weekly, that contains daily or weekly news, articles of opinion and features.
8. **Periodicals and Journals:** In journal and periodicals you will find writings of scholars with their various analysis, criticisms and opinions on laws.

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